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RUEUITH/TLO ANKARA TU PRIORITY
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000039

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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/08/2018

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: ONGOING PKK VIOLENCE TAKES A NEW TACK

REF: A. ANKARA 21

[1](#)B. ANKARA 31

Classified By: CDA Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: PKK violence has continued since 2004, when the terrorist group ended a ceasefire it had observed following the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1999. In 2007, the PKK was responsible for the deaths of at least 139 security personnel and 27 civilians. Another 216 security forces and 134 civilians were wounded in PKK-related violence. Included in these figures were victims of urban bombings (e.g., Ankara in May 2007) and attacks in Turkey's southeast. 2008 has begun in bloody fashion as well, with a January 3 car bomb in Diyarbakir killing six and wounding over 70 (ref A). As GOT officials consider ways to address longstanding concerns of Turkey's ethnic Kurdish population through political, economic, and social/cultural measures (ref B) -- reiterating their resolve in Diyarbakir over the weekend -- PKK terrorists are trying to strike in cities across Turkey through attempted urban bombings and vehicle arsons in an obvious effort to prevent political progress.
END SUMMARY

PKK VIOLENCE ROCKED TURKEY IN 2007...

[1](#)2. (SBU) In May 2007, the PKK was responsible for a massive explosion in central Ankara that killed seven civilians and wounded nearly 100. Violence continued throughout the summer and erupted in September with an attack on a minibus in southeastern Turkey, resulting in 12 deaths. It reached new heights with the October 21 cross-border incursion of over 200 terrorists from northern Iraq, in which 12 security forces were killed, another 33 wounded, and eight taken hostage.

...AND APPEARS LIKELY TO CONTINUE IN 2008

[1](#)3. (SBU) As the Turkish military began airstrikes against PKK

encampments in northern Iraq on December 16 and continued large-scale counterinsurgency operations in Turkey's southeast, and with the arrival of heavy snowfall in the region, the PKK began to alter its mode of operation. Having focused most of the summer on carrying out attacks against Turkish security personnel in southeastern Turkey through the detonation of road-side IEDs, the group returned to bombing urban centers with a January 3 car bomb that killed six and injured scores in the southeastern (and majority Kurdish) city of Diyarbakir. A suspect in the bombing, whom wire services claim was trained in PKK camps in northern Iraq, was arrested January 8. PKK-linked Firat News Agency quoted PKK official Bozan Tekin as apologizing for the attack on January 8, acknowledging it was carried out by a PKK group but asserting it was not planned by PKK headquarters.

¶4. (S) TNP in Istanbul apprehended a PKK operative on December 24, thwarting his attempt to plant an explosive device in an Istanbul subway station. The suspect had been sent from northern Iraq to carry out the bombing, according to the TNP.

¶5. (SBU) Two smaller sound bombs exploded in Istanbul on December 25 and December 26. One woman died and seven others were injured in the December 25 incident in which a small explosive device detonated in a trash container.

¶6. (C) TNP sources in Adana told us they are pursuing intelligence leads alluding to the possible presence of vans filled with explosives that may be detonated in Adana, Gaziantep, and Kahramanmaras. At the same time, police raids seized large amounts of the PKK's explosive of choice, C-4, in Inegol, near Bursa, (14 kilograms) and in the eastern city

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of Van (50 kilograms).

¶7. (C) The PKK has also been tagged with carrying out more than 100 reported incidents of vehicle arson in 13 different cities over the past month. Turkish National Police (TNP) officials in Istanbul, where the vast majority of such incidents have occurred, advised they expect the campaign to continue. They claimed the arson attacks were being committed by Kurdish teenagers, recruited by the PKK. The areas in Istanbul most affected by the attacks were predominantly Kurdish. Given the times, locations, and nature of the attacks, officials said little could be done to prevent further arson. Some teenagers have been arrested, but it would be impossible to monitor Kurdish youths or the poor in the congested neighborhoods being targeted to an extent that would reduce the attacks significantly.

¶8. (S) COMMENT: With the bulk of its fighting force in northern Iraq penned in by a massive Turkish security presence along the Turkey-Iraq border, airborne intelligence assets tracking their movements, and bitter winter weather, it appears urban bombings and vehicle arsons may become the PKK's primary modes of attack in its effort to undermine political progress between Turkey and Iraq as well as between the GOT and its Kurdish citizens. However, the GOT has not taken the bait and the seams are showing: resorting to an attack in majority Kurdish Diyarbakir, then having to apologize is a first for the PKK, as is the snubbing by Diyarbakir residents of PKK-linked Democratic Society Party (DTP) MPs who had traveled there to pay condolences after the bombing.

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